WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for creating and deploying an application in a computing system, the method comprising:

creating at least one template having references to specific functionality that is to be invoked at a given client;

registering said references of said at least one template with a dictionary, each reference corresponding to a run-time handler for invoking one or more run-time services; and

executing the application at a particular client, including substeps of:

receiving a run-time request from the particular client to load said at least one template,

determining from said dictionary and from said references of said at least one template any specific functionality that is to be invoked for the particular client, and

invoking specific functionality for the particular client by invoking corresponding run-time handlers for said determined references.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one template comprises at least one page description language template.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said at least page description language template comprises at least one Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) document.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein said at least page description language template comprises at least one Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) document.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said references are embedded in said at least one template using user-defined tags.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein which specific functionality that is actually invoked is determined based, at least in part, on which platform a given client executes.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining step includes:

invoking a template manager for parsing said at least one template, for determining references embedded in said at least one template.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said references comprise tokens that are parsed by the template manager.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein each token may be resolved into a request for a specific run-time service.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein said template manager stores parsed templates in a template cache, so that each template need only be parsed once.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said parsed templates are maintained on a persistent storage, so that the parsed templates are available from one application execution session to another.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein any parsed templates are flushed, so that said system is forced to again parse said at least one template.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein said run-time services of the system include providing access to information from a back-end database.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein said back-end database comprises an SQL database system that retrieves information in response to SQL queries.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one template comprises at least one read-only template.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one template is loaded by browser software running at said particular client.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one template comprises an input form having a platform-specific presentation when rendered at a given client.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein said run-time request includes opening a communication socket at the particular client.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein said specific functionality invoked is based, at least in part, on a specific client session that is executing.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein said application comprises a single code base application that is deployed on multiple platforms.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein new functionality is added to said application by modifying said at least one template, so that the new functionality may be added without recompiling said application.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein said references comprise tokens specifying programming constructs.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said programming constructs include conditional logic statements.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said conditional logic statements include "if" statements.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein said conditional logic statements include "for" loops.

26. A system for executing an application, the system comprising:

at least one client computer running browser software;

a template repository for storing templates, each template including tokens specifying particular run-time services to be invoked for a given client operating on a given platform;

a template manager, responsive to requests from a client computer, for parsing at least one template for determining particular run-time services to be invoked for a given client; and

a back-end database providing client access to information, in response to client invocation of run-time services.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein said at least one client computer comprises a personal computer connected to a network.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein said network includes connectivity to the Internet.

29. The system of claim 26, wherein said browser software includes Internet browser software for viewing Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) documents.

30. The system of claim 26, wherein at least some of the templates comprise at least page description language template.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein said at least one page description language template comprises a Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) document.

32. The system of claim 30, wherein said at least one page description language template comprises a Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) document.

33. The system of claim 26, wherein said tokens are embedded in said at least one template using user-defined tags.

34. The system of claim 26, wherein which run-time services that are actually invoked is determined based, at least in part, on which platform a given client executes.

35. The system of claim 26, wherein each token may be resolved into a request for a specific run-time service.

36. The system of claim 26, wherein said template manager stores parsed templates in a template cache, so that each template need only be parsed once.

37. The system of claim 26, wherein said parsed templates are maintained on a persistent storage, so that the parsed templates are available from one application execution session to another.

38. The system of claim 26, wherein any parsed templates are occasionally flushed, so that said system is forced to again parse said at least one template.

39. The system of claim 26, wherein said run-time services of the system include providing access to information from said back-end database.

40. The system of claim 26, wherein said back-end database comprises an SQL database system that retrieves information in response to SQL queries.

41. The system of claim 26, wherein said at least one template comprises at least one read-only template.

42. The system of claim 26, wherein said at least one template is loaded by browser software running at said particular client.

43. The system of claim 26, wherein said at least one template comprises an input form having a platform-specific presentation when rendered at a given client.

44. The system of claim 26, wherein said requests include opening a communication socket at a given client.

45. The system of claim 26, wherein which run-time services are invoked is determined based, at least in part, on a specific client session that is executing.